AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-17 (cancelled)

18. (currently amended) A method of treating morning stiffness, loss of grip strength, painful joints, or swollen joints in a patient suffering from morning stiffness, loss of grip strength, painful joints, or swollen joints, consisting of identifying that a [[the]] patient suffers ~~suffering~~ from morning stiffness, loss of grip strength, painful joints, or swollen joints and administering to the patient that suffers ~~suffering~~ from morning stiffness, loss of grip strength, painful joints, or swollen joints a morning stiffness, loss of grip strength, painful joints, or swollen joints treating effective amount of erythropoietin over a treatment period; ~~wherein the patient has not been treated with iron~~

identifying that said patient that suffers from morning stiffness, loss of grip strength, painful joints, or swollen joints, has, after said treatment period in comparison to before said treatment period, a lower level of morning stiffness, loss of grip strength, painful joints, or swollen joints.

Claim 19 (canceled)

20. (currently amended) A method of ameliorating an erythrocyte sedimentation rate or C-reactive protein level in a patient in need of such amelioration, consisting of identifying [[the]] that a patient is in need of such amelioration and administering to the patient an erythrocyte sedimentation rate or C-reactive protein level activity ameliorating

effective amount of erythropoietin over a period; ~~wherein the patient has not been treated with iron~~

identifying that the erythrocyte sedimentation rate or C-reactive protein level in said patient has been ameliorated.

Claims 21-22 (canceled)

23. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the erythropoietin is human erythropoietin.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the erythropoietin is of recombinant origin.

25. (previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the erythropoietin is human erythropoietin.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the erythropoietin is of recombinant origin.

Claims 27-30 (canceled)

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the period comprises 6 weeks of treatment.

32. (previously presented) The method of claim 18 wherein the patient suffers from rheumatoid arthritis.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 20 wherein the patient suffers from rheumatoid arthritis.

34. (previously presented) The method of claim 18 wherein the treatment period is at least 3 weeks.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 20 wherein the treatment period is at least 3 weeks.

36. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the treatment period comprises 6 weeks of treatment.